

DETERMINING A REMOTE MANAGEMENT PROCESSOR'S IP ADDRESS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates in general to the field of computers, and in particular to servers using management processors. Still more particularly, the present invention relates to a method and system for a remote management processor to automatically provide its own Internet Protocol (IP) address to the management server assigned to manage it when the remote management processor receives its IP address from a DHCP server.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0002] Current generation servers are often modular in their architecture. This modularity extends not only to the internal structure of the server, but also to appropriated resources of the server. A person responsible for administering the server may wish to use a management server (i.e. a computer running a management server software package) to access information about the server's hardware resources. They may also purchase a management processor for the server that allows them to communicate with the server even when the server's operating system is not present. In order to access the server when its operating system is not present, the management server must be able to communicate with the remote hardware server via its management processor's network interface.

[0003] Such a modular system is illustrated in **Figure 1**. A management server **102** is designed to communicate via a network **104** with a remote management processor **106**, which provides a communication interface to a remote hardware server **116**. The communication between management server **102** and remote management processor **106** is typically via respective network interface cards (NICs) **110a and b**, which are usually Ethernet cards. Remote hardware server **116** communicates information about hardware resources **114** controlled by its

local operating system via a system NIC **110c**. These resources may be memory, logic, and other hardware.

[0004] As the dotted line between NIC **110a-1** and NIC **110b** suggests, management server **102** cannot communicate with remote management processor **106** unless management server **102** knows the IP address of remote management processor **106**.

[0005] Remote management processor **106** can obtain an IP address from a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) server **108**, which is typically part of a network of DHCP servers. To obtain an IP address, remote management processor **106** follows well-established DHCP protocol. As described in **Figure 2**, this protocol begins with a DHCP client, here being remote management processor **106**, broadcasting a DHCP DISCOVER request to a network of DHCP servers **112**. This DHCP DISCOVER packet asks any authorized DHCP Server receiving the DHCP DISCOVER packet for information about leasing an IP address. One or more DHCP servers in DHCP server network **112** respond with DHCP OFFER messages back to the remote management processor **106**. The DHCP OFFER messages contain the IP addresses of the responding DHCP servers, plus a Dynamic IP address with lease information about the IP addresses being offered (typically as defined by the Internet Engineering Task Force Request For Comments 1534, 2131, and 2132).

[0006] The remote management processor **106** then decides which DHCP OFFER to accept, based on some pre-determined criteria, such as which DHCP OFFER was received first, which lease is most attractive to the needs of the remote sub-system processor **106**, etc. The remote management processor **106** then returns a DHCP REQUEST message to the selected DHCP server **108** that sent the chosen DHCP OFFER. This DHCP Server **108** then returns a DHCP ACK message, which includes an IP address for the remote management processor **106**, plus lease and configuration information related to that IP address assignment.

[0007] A serious problem with the procedure described in **Figures 1 and 2** is that the management server **102** does not have an easy way of knowing when the remote management processor **106** comes on line, or what the IP address for the remote management processor **106**

is. The remote management processor **106** is “unmanageable” as is remote hardware server **116** until the management server **102** being used by the administrator is given this information somehow. In other words, the administrator using management server **102** likely knows that he has bought or leased services from the remote management processor **106**, but he doesn't know how to access these services without first knowing the IP address of the remote management processor **106**. Therefore, an engineer or technician must go to the physical location of the remote management processor **106**, configure it with an IP address as described in **Figure 2**, and then call the system administrator on the phone telling that administrator that the remote management processor **106** is on line and what IP address is assigned to the remote management processor **106**.

[0008] What is needed, therefore, is a method and system that automatically informs the management server what the IP address of the remote management processor coming on line is. Preferably, such a method and system would not require additional hardware, nor would it require additional software in the management server or the DHCP server.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention is directed to a method and system for providing an address of a remote management processor to a management server. When setting up a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) server, the administrator configures a private Option in the DHCP server. The Option data contains the IP address of the management server designated to use the remote management processor. When the remote management processor powers up, it sends a request for an IP address to the DHCP server, which returns both the requested IP address as well as the Option data. The firmware in the management processor is capable of reading and interpreting the option data, and sends the management server, plus any other configured destinations, the IP address of the remote management processor in an Alert packet. The management server is thus notified that the remote management processor is on-line and available to manage the remote hardware server for the management server.

[0010] The above, as well as additional objectives, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent in the following detailed written description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further purposes and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, where:

[0012] **Figure 1** depicts a prior art diagram of a network connecting a remote sub-system processor to a management server and a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) Server;

[0013] **Figure 2** illustrates a prior art method for the remote management processor to obtain an Internet Protocol (IP) address from the DHCP Server;

[0014] **Figures 3a-b** depict a block diagram of the present invention system enabling the remote management processor to convey to the management server a newly acquired IP address for the remote management processor;

[0015] **Figure 4** is a flow chart describing an initial configuration of the DHCP Server, and

[0016] **Figure 5** illustrates preferred components of the management server, DHCP server and remote management processor.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0017] With reference now to **Figure 3**, there is depicted a block diagram of a preferred embodiment of the present invention. A remote management processor **306** sends a DHCP REQUEST to a DHCP Server **308**. The DHCP Server **308** is configured with a private option by the administrator of the management server **302** that is designated to manage the remote management processor **306**. The option is set to the IP address of the management server **302**. Thus, the DHCP ACK packet from DHCP Server **308** includes both the IP address being assigned to remote sub-system processor **306** as well as special Option data, which includes the IP address of management server **302**. Both IP addresses are stored in remote management processor **306**.

[0018] When the remote management processor **306** receives the DHCP ACK packet, special code in the remote management processor **306** searches the DHCP ACK packet for the special Option data, which includes the IP address of management server **302**. Remote management processor **306** stores the Option data as an alert destination. Responsive to detecting the Option data, the remote management processor **306** then sends its IP address to management server **302** in an ALERT packet. Management server **302** receives the ALERT packet, and stores the information about the IP address assigned to remote management processor **306**. This information includes the IP address itself, as well as the shelf life of the address and any special restrictions or features associated with the IP address.

[0019] With reference now to **Figure 4**, there is depicted a flow-chart describing the set-up of DHCP Server **308** described in **Figure 3**. Starting at block **402**, the administrator of the management server begins the setup of the DHCP Server by identifying in a Configuration File what IP addresses the DHCP Server is authorized to assign.

[0020] With reference now to block **404**, the administrator of the management server continues configuring the DHCP server by defining Option data, which includes the IP address of the management server. As described above, the remote management processor has special code that looks for the Option data in the DHCP ACK packet. When the Option data containing the

IP address of the management server is detected (block **406**), the remote sub-system processor then sends an ALERT message to the management server (block **408**), alerting the management server to the fact that the remote management processor now has an IP address and what that IP address is, thus enabling the management server in utilizing the function of the remote management processor. This function may or may not require the use of an operating system, thus making the management processor's function available as soon as an IP address is assigned.

[0021] With reference now to **Figure 5**, there is depicted a block diagram of a preferred embodiment of management server **302**. Management server **302** includes a processor **502**, which is connected to a system bus **508**. In the exemplary embodiment, management server **302** includes a graphics adapter **504** also connected to system bus **508**, receiving information for display **506**.

[0022] Also connected to system bus **508** are system memory **510** and input/output (I/O) bus bridge **512**. I/O bus bridge **512** couples I/O bus **514** to system bus **508**, relaying and/or transforming data transactions from one bus to the other. Peripheral devices such as nonvolatile storage **516**, which may be a hard disk drive, floppy drive, a compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM), a digital video disk (DVD) drive, or the like, and input device **518**, which may include a conventional mouse, a trackball, or the like, is connected to I/O bus **514**. Client computer **500** connects with network **520** via a network interface card (NIC) **526** as shown.

[0023] Network **520** may be the Internet, an enterprise confined intranet, an extranet, or any other network system known to those skilled in the art of computers.

[0024] The exemplary embodiment shown in **Figure 5** is provided solely for the purposes of explaining the invention and those skilled in the art will recognize that numerous variations are possible, both in form and function. For instance, data processing system **500** might also include a sound card and audio speakers, and numerous other optional components. All such variations are believed to be within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0025] Connected to network 530 is remote management processor 306, which in a preferred embodiment has a same or similar architecture as described for management server 302 in detail in Figure 5. Connected to remote management processor 306 is DHCP server 308, which also has a same or similar architecture as described for management server 302

[0026] The present invention therefore provides a method and service allowing an administrator of a management server to configure a DHCP Server in such a way that when the DHCP Server assigns an IP address to the remote management processor, the management server is automatically so notified by the remote management processor. This allows the management server to know where all of the remote management processors are, and how to communicate with them, thus making the addition of remote resources seamless and automatic.

[0027] It should be understood that at least some aspects of the present invention may alternatively be implemented in a program product. Programs defining functions on the present invention can be delivered to a data storage system or a computer system via a variety of signal-bearing media, which include, without limitation, non-writable storage media (e.g., CD-ROM), writable storage media (e.g., a floppy diskette, hard disk drive, read/write CD ROM, optical media), and communication media, such as computer and telephone networks including Ethernet. It should be understood, therefore in such signal-bearing media when carrying or encoding computer readable instructions that direct method functions in the present invention, represent alternative embodiments of the present invention. Further, it is understood that the present invention may be implemented by a system having means in the form of hardware, software, or a combination of software and hardware as described herein or their equivalent.

[0028] While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to a preferred embodiment, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.